

Seasonable Advice to Youth.

A ~~supplement~~

Funeral Sermon

On *Psal.* 119. 9.

Preach'd upon the DEATH

OF

Mr. Richard Walter, Jun.



In the Eighteenth Year of his Age.

January 13th, 1691.

By JOHN SHOWER.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Samuel Crouch, at the Corner of Pope's-
Head-Alley, over against the Royal-Exchange, 1692.

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T O

Mr. JOHN WALTER.

Sir,

IF the following Sermon upon the Death of your Brother, may be of any Use and Advantage unto others, the Obligation will be very much owing to you, with whose Desire I complied in the Preaching of it, and now in the making of it Publick: The chief of my Design therein being the Instruction of the Younger sort, I could not so fitly prefix any other Name as yours. I hope your tender Affection to your Brother will make you read this Memorial of him with great Seriousness; and assist your good Improvement of those Counsels, which are so needful for Persons of your Age to consider, and obey.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

I shall only add my Hearty Prayer to God for the Early Impressions of his Grace, to Sanctifie you betimes, and make you to know and love the Holy Scriptures, and so preserve you from the Snares of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and particularly from Youthful Lusts.

If this Sermon may any way contribute to such a desirable effect on you, and others of your Age, I shall bless God.

I am Yours,

*London, Feb.
25. 1693.*

in the best Services,

John Shower.

A Funeral
SERMON
On the DEATH of
Mr. Richard Walter.

Pſalm. 119. 9.

Wherewithal shall a Young Man cleanse his way?
By taking Heed thereto according to thy
Word.

A Practical Discourse to Young Persons would not be unfit at any Time, in this Age, and in this City, if there were no special Occasion leading to it : But it is most fit, when there is one, such as the Providence of God hath now given me, by the *Death and Funeral* of a Young Gentleman. What I shall say on *that Subject*, I reserve for the Close, to enforce the Improvement of the *other* contained in this Text : Which will admit to be considered two ways. Either

First, As the rectifying and cleansing the way of Youth, is a necessary *Means* in order to the obeying God's Word, and the keeping his Commandments.

Dr. Hammond.

ments. The Original will bear this Interpretation: And some Ancient Versions do countenance it. The Sense then is this, *How shall Young Men be purged and purified by Divine Grace, so as thereby to be qualified for Obedience to God?* It is a kind of Prayer (in a Poetick strain) for that Grace which is necessary to Holy Walking. But,

Secondly, I chuse rather to consider those Words, as an Answer to the Enquiry, *by what means* we may be sanctified betimes, and enabled to please and obey God in our whole Course. And that we are told, is by carefully observing, and *taking heed to the Word of God*: The Blessed Influence whereof to that purpose is here Asserted and Amplified. Partly from the *Subject*, with respect to whom it hath this Effect, *A Young Man*. Partly from the special Object, about which this purifying Influence of the Divine Word is employed, in such an one, *i. e. The Cleansing of his way*. This extends to all that needs to be rectified either in Heart or Life, in Spirit or Practice: Not only as to his external Behaviour, but his inward Principles and Temper. For we read of the Young Man's walking *in the way of his own Heart*, and in the sight of his own Eyes, Eccl. xi. 9.

Neither are we to over-look the Form and Manner of Expression, by way of *Question*, *Wherewithal shall a Young Man cleanse his way?* The Psalmist had before declared the Desire of his Soul, that his Life might be ordered according to God's Word. *Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes!* He had professed the Purpose and Resolution of his Heart to endeavour it. *I will keep thy Statutes, O forsake me*

Ver. 5.

Ver. 8.

me not utterly ! Upon which follows the Interrogation in the Text, *Wherewithal, &c. i. e.* But how shall one so Young as I am, under the Guidance of a Deceived Mind, and the Bias of Corrupt and Vicious Inclinations, assisted with very little Experience, surrounded with many dangerous Examples, and suitable Temptations, &c. *How, or wherewithal shall such a One be Cleansed, and Reformed, and Enabled to please and obey God ?* The Answer is, by attending to the Instructions of his Word, by observing the Orders and Directions he hath there given us, by applying that Word for our Sanctification, and by following the Holy Counsels and Conduct of it.

The Question it self how this may be done, doth suppose the *Necessity*, and imply the *Difficulty* of it. There is great need it should be done ; but how shall it be effected ? Were it not a matter of some Difficulty, there would be no ground for such a Question, *by what means* it may be brought about. But because it is not a slight and easie, though most needful matter, the proper means must be diligently sought for, and minded, *viz. by taking heed unto the Word of God.*

For the opening of this Passage, there are *Four things* to be considered.

First, The sinful ways of Youth, that need to be Rectified and Cleansed.

Secondly, The Difficulty that is supposed by the Interrogation, to Purifie and Reform them.

Thirdly, The sufficient and only means how this may be done, *i. e.* by the Word of God.

Fourthly, The Necessity of careful Attendance unto this Word, and particular Application of it, to an effectual Cure.

First, Concerning the sinful impure ways of Youth, which need to be Rectified and Cleansed. The Corruption of Human Nature upon the the First Apostacy, is not more plainly expressed in the Divine Revelation, than manifest in the effects of it, unto the experience of all, who are any ways acquainted with themselves. We need but compare what we find in our selves with the Holy Image, Nature, and Law of God unto which at first there was a just Conformity and Agreement in the Nature of Man. But now we are alienated from God, and disaffected to him: The inward and deep depravation of the Understanding and Will, the Two Superior Powers of the Soul, that command the rest, may easily be discerned, if we will but examine and reflect upon our selves. That our Judgments are deceived, and our Minds blinded, and our Wills fetter'd by Sensual Lusts, and that we are pleased with our Slavery, and unwilling to be delivered. The Rectitude of our Nature being lost by the First Transgression, an Hereditary Corruption is transmitted from our First Parents to all their Posterity. We are shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin: And that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? This discovers it self very early in Children, and with more violence in the various Lusts of Youth, according to the several circumstances of their Conditions in the World, and the different Channel that is formed for it by their particular Constitutions and Tempers. The most principal Duties and Institutions of Christianity, do suppose this Degeneracy and Corruption of Human Nature; and in this and many other Scriptures, it is manifestly implied. The Subject of this Text is not Pure

Tit. 3. 3.

and

and Unbiaſſed, equally indifferent unto Good or Evil, but 'tis ſuppoſed that he needs to be purified, as well as guided. *Wherewithal ſhall a Young Man cleanse his way? His way cleansed:* There is hardly any Metaphor whereby the Affections and Converſations of Men are more uſually expreſſed, than by this of their *Way* and *Walk*: But there are ſome particular ways of Wickedneſs more appropriate unto *Youth*, than to Elder Perſons. The Inſtructions, Counſels and Exhortations of the Holy Scriptures, (beſides thoſe of common and univerſal Concern,) are therefore all ſuited to the various Claſſes under which Men may be ſeverally conſidered. There are ſome corrupt Inclinations and Practices, ſome ways of Sin to which *Young Men* are more inclined and tempted than before or after that Age: which in Childhood they are not arrived unto, and in Riper Years are commonly exchanged for others: I ſay *commonly*, becauſe ſometimes Gray Hairs are deformed by the Vices and Follies of Youth; and ſometimes the Wiſdom and Virtue of Old Age may be Eminently the Ornament of Young Men. Old Age may ſometimes *flourish* in Youth, and be as often *perished* in thoſe that are well ſtricken in Years. Covetouſneſs for inſtance, is not ſo much the Peculiar Vice of the Age, but may be the Fault of Young Perſons. The *Rich Young Man* in the Goſpel is an Inſtance; who told our Lord, that he had kept the Commandments. But he had Houſes, and Lands, and Bags of Mony, which ſtood in his way to Heaven, thoſe he obſerved, and kept as well as the Commandments. Particular Countries and Places, particular Callings and Relations, particular Seaſons and Times may have their ſpecial Sins; and ſo have the

2 Tim. 2.
22.

the different Ages of Men. The Ignorance of Youth is commonly attended with Pride and Conceitedness. For they who know but a few things, are always most presumptuous of their own Understanding, and so are commonly more Rash and Hasty, Giddy and Inconstant, fond of Liberty, and Impatient of Restraint, Affecters of Novelty, and Lovers of Pleasure, of Company, Pastime, and sensual Mirth, &c. There are some youthful Lusts, which young *Timothy* is warned against, such as Ambition and Vain-glory, Curiosity, and Envy to appear Great and considerable before others, as the Scope of the Place, and three or four following Verses seem to manifest. Not *Drunkenness* and *Unclean-ness*, or such carnal Lusts. For tho' all Men have the Seeds of these, yet the Modesty and Frugality, the Weakness of Constitution, and often Infirmities of *Timothy* make it very improbable they should here be principally meant. The Corruption of Human Nature, 'tis true, doth usually and with great Violence discover it self in unsanctified Youth, by *these Lusts* of the Flesh, These are some of the ways of their Heart, according to which they form their Lives: Where the Restraint of Bodily Temper, special Providence, Religious Education, and Divine Grace do not make the difference. I need not go about to prove that *Childhood and Youth are Vanity, or Sinful Folly*, considering the many Examples in Scripture, and the multitude of such in every Age, and in none more than our own; considering the frequent Warnings given us by God against such Lusts; considering the bitter Remorses, and penitent Confessions of many who are truly Converted, or but Awakned by the prospect of Death and Judgment,

ment; considering the earnest Supplications even of Good Men, that God would not *Remember the Sins of their Youth*. Even *David* thought he had cause for such a Request, *Psal.* 25. 7. whose Poverty and Piety, whose Industry and Afflictive Trials in his Younger Years, were a very great Restraint from those Lusts which are more Unbridled in others of another Education and Condition. Not to mention how many in Riper Years are made to *possess the Sins of their Youth*, *Job* 13. 26. and *their very Bones are full of them*, *Job* 20. 11. For a Young Sinner hath himself for his *Heir* and *Successor*, when he is Old; and that which he receives for his Inheritance, is only the sorrowful remembrance and bitter Fruits of his Youthful Follies.

It is sad to consider how many Young Men of hopeful Parts, and promising Capacities, are taken in the Devils Snares, in the pursuit of Sensual Pleasures; and lay up Matter for future Diseases, and bodily Pains; how they poison their Blood, and weaken their Constitutions; how they hasten or antedate the Infirmities of Old Age, and do what they can to dig their own Graves. But it is a more Melancholly Reflection, to consider how they provoke God, and incense his Almighty Vengeance; how they wound and wrong their own Souls, and treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath; how they provide Fuel for everlasting Fire, and consign their Bodies and Souls to Hell for ever. To see them run headlong to their own destruction, by walking in the way of their Hearts, and in the sight of their own Eyes: To consider how easily they are led into destructive Paths, and made a cheap and hasty Prey by the Tempter, till they are hardned
past.

past Recovery, or cut off in the midst of their days, by a sudden Arrest of Judgment. And so for the short and vain Pleasures of Youth, they perish to Eternity; unless some few of them by an extraordinary Grace are recovered at the last Hour, and renewed unto Saving Repentance: But it is much to be feared, that very few *Death-Bed Penitents* are so.

Secondly, It is supposed to be a matter of no small Difficulty, for a Young Man to Reform and Cleanse his Ways. This in part appears from what hath been said already of the Corruption of Human Nature, and the Vicious Inclinations of Youth. Their Ignorance and Rashness, and want of Experience, their Aversion to serious Thoughts, for fear of *Melancholy*; with the apprehended unsuitableness of Restraint and Retirement unto Persons of their Age, do all increase the Difficulty. They usually reckon that they have the World before them, they have Time enough hereafter, and are now in the Age of Liberty and Pleasure, and that both God and Man will indulge a great deal to *them*, because of their Youth; Presuming at the same time, that *a great while hence*, they shall have Opportunity and Heart, and Help, to work out their Salvation when ever they please. For when they Calculate their own Nativities, they reckon to the longest Term of Human Life, that any are wont to reach to. Their Sun is climbing higher, they have a great while to Night, and so are far removed from the Thoughts of Death. Accordingly, when ever they are advised by those who are *Elder*, to look forward to the Grave, and beyond it, to bethink themselves of their Everlasting State, and provide for an Endless Life; their inward

inward Thought is agreeable to the High-Priests Answer unto *Judas*, *What is that to us, look thou to that.* Such is the Strength and Power of Sense, and Fancy in the Days of our Youth ; such is the Weakness of our Reason, (as not having attained to any great Consistency of Judgment, which must be ripened by Consideration and Experience :) such is the violence of our Passions, and the Inconstancy of our Resolutions ; so variable and uncertain the Objects of our Affections and Choice ; such the venomous Influence of *Self-Flattery*, and that of others about us ; such the force of Examples, and so great the number of ill ones ; so deep the Impressions we receive by the Company we converse with ; (especially if Atheistical or Licentious Youths are the Instruments of the Devil to entice us ;) so little command have we of our selves, to bridle those Impetuous Lusts that are easily Fired by every Spark of Temptation ; and so intolerable is the Reproach imagined of being *singular*, of not complying with the Customs of those of the same Age with our selves, that on these and the like Accounts, the Devil hath a mighty Advantage against us, in that Portion of our Time.

For the most part, Young Men are Changeable and Unsteady, Heedless and Unwary, are but little Fortified against the Wiles of the Devil ; are little used to consider things with any Strength, and Intenseness of Thought, and prone to flatter themselves with foolish hopes and projects of the wonderful things which they shall be able to compass, to do, and be, and enjoy, and reach, before they leave the World, &c. That 'tis no wonder that the Principal (because most hopeful) Attempts of the Devil are directed against such, to deceive and destroy them by Youthful

Arist. E-
thic. Lib. 1.
Chap. 1.

Lusts. Children are not capable of doing him such Service, or themselves such Prejudice, or of being employed to so many ill-purposes: And commonly Old Men are already fix'd in their way. The Minds of Youth are more flexible, and withal sharper for any Undertaking; their Bodies stronger and more active for most kinds of Wickedness, their Blood more warm, their Spirits more Vigorous, as their Sinful Desires are more Raging, and all their Passions more vehement. On which account the Wisdom of the Ancients would not admit Persons very Young to the Lectures of Moral, or Civil Philosophy: as supposing them to be so very much under the Government of their Passions, that good Counsel would be lost upon them, and all such Discourses prove in vain.

But though the Philosophers despaired of being able to reclaim and reduce Young Men by their weak and naked Rules of Morality, we need not do so, who are under the dispensation of a Gospel of Grace, and are acquainted with the power of the Divine Word. The Precepts of Philosophy may assist our Recovery from the grosser Immoralities in practice; such as violate the plain Sentiments of natural Conscience, or are Scandalous in the view of Men. But the Divine Word, (accompanied with the power of the Spirit,) can work an effectual Cure in Heart and Life, by healing our *Corrupt Nature*, and making us partakers of the *Divine*. This is one special Privilege of the Gospel State; and is much for the honour of Divine Grace; recommending at the same time the Excellency of the Word of God, as the holy means of it. Which leads us to consider

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That the Word of God is the sufficient, and only means of Cleansing and Reforming the sinful ways of Youth: This Enlightens the Eyes, Converts the Soul, makes Wise the Simple, shews us the way of Life, and keeps us from the Paths of the Destroyer. It was for this end, that our Blessed Lord gave himself, *that we might be Sanctified and Cleansed with the Washing of Water, by the Word*, Eph. 5. 26. He declared that his Disciples were *Clean by the Word he had spoken to them*, John 15. 3. He prays that they might be *Sanctified by the Truth*, which Truth is his *Word*; and makes the same Request for all those who should afterwards believe, *John 17. 20.*

Psal. 19. 6,
7. 8.
Psal. 17. 4.
Psal. 37. 31.
Prov. 6. 23.

And here we might distinctly consider, that hereby we are made acquainted with the *Nature and Necessity* of this Sanctification, and Cleansing: And that by Divine Appointment, this is the ordinary *Means* of effecting it. And farther, that herein the Wisdom of God is honoured, by its exceeding *Fitness* to that end.

I. Without the knowledge of this Word, we could not fully have understood the loathsome Depravity and Corruption of our Hearts, or the manifold Transgressions of our Lives. How wretchedly we are Polluted, and how often we Offend; how Defective are our best Duties; how short we come of our Rule and Pattern; and what need there is of seeking to recover the Divine Image and Life.

This Blessed Word instructs us, how the Ground of our Sanctification is laid in the Satisfaction of Christ: how it is procured, and how we may partake of it: What we owe to the Blood of the Cross, and what to the influence of the Divine Spirit. The Treasury of Heaven was opened by

Acts 3. 26.

the Sacrifice of Christ, that the Holy Spirit might be given to Convince and Convert the World. His *Departure or going away*, which comprehend his Death and Ascension, was necessary and expedient unto this.

John 15.

We are also here instructed, how this Sanctification is carried on, by our perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. For this Water of the Spirit hath a continual Cleansing Virtue upon all true Christians, until their Purified Souls ascend to Heaven. He that pitied them when they were in their Pollution, will not leave them after they are Cleansed, till he hath finished his Work.

It is from this Word that we are acquainted with the *Necessity* and *Extent* of this Sanctification, as reaching to *Soul, Body* and *Spirit*. It tells us the very *Mind* and *Conscience* are defiled; and that there needs not only the Cleansing of our *Hands*, but the Purifying of our *Hearts*. For the Doctrine of the Grace of God, *teacheth us to deny all Ungodliness and Wordly Lusts*; to kill the Lusts of the Eyes, to mortifie the Pride of Life, to crucifie the Desires of the Flesh, and bring the Understanding and Conscience, and every Thought into Subjection to the Laws of Christ. This tells us what the Filthiness of *Flesh* and *Spirit* is, from which we must be Cleansed: and how indispensably necessary this is to our Acceptance with God, and our Communion with him. This represents the Divine Purity, (which we are to imitate and resemble,) as every way Amiable and Excellent. As, that the Blessed God essentially hates every Sin, earnestly forbids it, and terribly threatens it, and patiently dissuades us from it, and severely punishes it, and hath mercifully sent his

Tit. 2. 11,
12, 13, 14.

James 4.8.

1 Cor. 7.1.

Son to destroy this Work of the Devil : Therefore that he *cannot tempt any man to evil*. or neceffitate and caufe the Sins of Men, which he warns them againft on pain of Damnation.

Never was inward Purity fo preffed by any Law before ; or the univerfal Sanctification of our Nature advanced to fuch a pitch. No other Law pretends to reach to the inward Thoughts of the Heart, as thofe in the Word ; which forbids us to Covet, to Luft, or hate our Brother in our Heart. This ranfacks every filthy Corner, and pierceth into the Secrets and Recefles of every Man's Breaf ; fpeaking with abfolute Authority to the very Grounds, Principles, and Ends of every Action : diffefting the whole Body of Sin, uncovering the inward Ulcers of the Soul, manifefting that a Luftful Defire, impure Mouth, or an unclean Hand, will make a Man polluted before God, and ftand guilty of the Breach of his Commandment. This Law is exceeding Broad, it forbids not only the finful Acts, but the Instruments of 'em, what would begin or promote 'em, or is chofen for the Sin's fake, with relation, or in order to it. This fhews us whence our Infection did firft arife, tracing it unto its Spring-head, the firft Apoftacy from God ; manifefting the fpotlefs Holinefs of the Divine Majefty, and his perfect abhorrence of every Sin, fo as to judge and condemn the invifible rifings of Difobedience, and Contrariety to it, in our very *Thoughts*. Yea, by the meafures of the Gospel, we are unclean, unlefs we have active Purities. If we are not crucified to the World, we are covetous : we are malicious, and hate our Brother, if we do him not all the Good we can ; tho he have treated us injuriously ;
we

we dishonour the Name of Christ, if we do not to our utmost advance his Glory.

Eph. 5. 13. This is that *Light which maketh manifest*; discovering that Deformity in Sin, which we never saw before; and so much of it in the Heart, as we never before believed; with the aggravating Spots of many plausible Duties, and the provoking circumstances of our particular Faults. For when we thought our selves very *Absolons* for Beauty, by looking into this Glass, we appear as vile and loathsome as Lepers: and all our Secret Sins, which are always in the Light of God's Countenance, are by the Word set in order before us. What is said of the Sun in the Heavens, is true of this Word, its Circuit is to the Ends of the Earth, and *there is nothing hid*

Psal. 19. 6. *from the Light and Heat thereof.*

2. This may be also consider'd as *the ordinary Means*, which God hath appointed for the cleansing of our Hearts and Ways. And therefore the Sanctification of the Spirit, and believing of the Truth, are joyned together. The Sense of some particular, more notorious Sin, is commonly the first means to humble the Soul: When the Charge is brought home by the Word to this or that Person, *Thou art the Man*, or *Thou art the Woman*, who hast scorned and slighted the Authority of thy Maker, in this or the other Instance. Thou art the Fool-hardy Rebellious Creature, who hast affronted thy Sovereign, who hast despised that Goodness, which should have led thee to Repentance; abused that Patience, which hath a tendency to thy Salvation; rejected that Grace, that would have helped thee; and condemned that Redeemer, who shed his Blood for thee. This Voice of the Lord is powerful, to
shake

1 Pet 1. 22.

2 Theff. 2.

13.

Acts 15. 9.

shake the stoutest Cedars ; and make a *Felix* on the Bench to tremble, when preached but by a Prisoner at the Bar. They that Crucified the Redeemer, and scorned his Doctrine, were pierced to the Heart, and cry out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do be saved!* By this the Chains of the Devil are knock'd off, and his Captives recovered into the Liberty of God's Service. *You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free, John 8. 32.* In this *Jordan* the most polluted Creatures have been washed ; and Hearts full of loathsome Filth have been changed into Vessels of Purity. *Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified, 1 Cor. 6. 9.*

3. This therefore is the most likely, fit and proper Means. For besides, the Encouragement of these Examples to seek for cleansing, we have others propounded as our *Patterns* to imitate. Sometimes the Blessed God himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may not rest in low Attainments ; and sometimes the Examples of the Saints, that we might not despair of being healed. For the same powerful Grace that hath sanctified others, is able to do the like for us. Therefore while our Impotency and Impurity is declared in this Word, we are directed by it to a *Fountain open for sin, and for uncleanness.* We have Promises and Precepts most graciously connected. What God commands us in one Place as our Duty, he promiseth to do for us by his Spirit, or enable us to do in another ; or at least gives us ground to hope he will.

Let us then consider the exceeding great and precious *Promises*, which are the Motives, and Means of our being cleansed from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit,

Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. For by them we are made *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Mr. Howe's
Blessedness
of the
Righteous.
p. 268.

It's by this means Divine Impressions are made upon the Soul, the obdurate Heart of a Sinner melted and overcome, and transform'd into the Image of God. Compare this *Means* God works by, with the *Subject* to be wrought upon, and the *Effect* to be wrought, and none can be conceived *fitter*. It is the Office of the Word, by Precepts, Promises and Rewards, to inform the Judgment, and awaken Conscience, and persuade the Will. It is some Encouragement to expect the Influence of the Spirit, in the use of this means, because it is so excellently fitted to this End, to heal our Impotency; which is not *Natural* but *Moral*. And God would not appoint us Means, which should be altogether in vain.

Dr. O. of
the Domi-
nion of Sin
and Grace.
P. 14.

'Grace is tender'd unto Men in the preaching of the Gospel, to enable them to perform, and comply with that which God requires. For altho we know not the Way and Means, of the effectual Communications of Grace unto the Souls of Men: *This is certain*, That Grace is so tender'd in the Preaching of the Gospel, that none go without it, none are destitute of its Aids and Assistance, but those alone who by a *Free Act of their own Wills*, do refuse and reject it. *Ye will not come unto me, that you may have Life*. And all Unbelievers have, or may have Experience of this in themselves, that they do *voluntarily* refuse the Assistance of Grace, which is offer'd for their Deliverance. *Therefore is their Destruction of themselves*.--- The common Grace * which is generally afforded to them, who live under the Gospel, extends so far as that they have thereby a *Day* allow'd them to provide for their Peace.

See to the
like pur-
pose, Mr.
Howe's
Blessedness
of the
Righteous,
ch. 17. &
* *Redem-
ers Tears*,
p. 53. Ap-
pend. p.
172.

'Peace. Now though this Grace is not yet certainly
'Saving, yet it tends to that which is so; and none
'have cause to despair, but that being duly improv'd
'and comply'd with, it may end in it. It is expres-
'ly said to such, (as live under the Gospel,) they
'are to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trem-
'bling, for this reason, that God works, or is working
'in them, i. e. stately and continually is at work, or
'is always ready to work in them, to will and to do, ^{ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτοῖς}
'of his own good Pleasure, 2 Phil. 12. 13. The matter ^{ἔστιν}
'fails not on his part. He will work on in order to
'Salvation, if they work in that way of Subordinate
'Co-operation, which his Command, and the ne-
'cessity of their own case oblige them unto.--The
'Impotence therefore of the Will, lies in its * Ob-
'stinacy. This is the meaning of St. Peter, speaking ^{'D. Bates's}
'of Unclean Persons, That their Eyes are full of Adul- ^{Harmony}
'tery, and they cannot cease from Sin. 'Tis from their ^{of the}
'own Fault alone, that they are without Power. ^{D. Attri-}
'Therefore the Scripture represents Man to be ^{butes, in}
'~~advers~~ & ~~weak~~, weak but wicked. His disabili- ^{Offav. p.}
'ty to Supernatural Good, arises from an inor- ^{63.}
'dinate Affection to that which is sensual.

Let me add, if this Holy Word (animated by the
Divine Spirit,) be not effectual to our Sanctifica-
tion, those means which are more Extraordi-
nary, are not like to be so, Psal. 73. 22, 23, 24.
They Rebelled against God, and would not believe his
Word, or Trust in his Salvation; though he commanded
the Clouds from above, and opened the Doors of Hea-
ven, and rained Manna for them to Eat, and gave
them the Corn of Heaven. Their Victuals came out
of the Clouds, and their Water cut of a Rock, and
yet these Miracles did not Convert them. Neither
the Miracles of Moses, or those of our Blessed Lord,

were sufficient in their time. In some Places our Lord wrought Miracles, and yet they desired him to be gone out of their Coasts: And when he was on the Cross, they jeered him with his Miracles, though they could not but acknowledg them; *he saved others, himself he cannot; let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe.* After the Miraculous Feeding of Two Thousand with Five Loaves and Two Little Fishes, the People were astonished, and said one to another, *This is he that should come*; this doubtless is the expected and long looked for *Messias*; and would have taken him by force, and made him King: And yet I think the very next Day, at least within a Day or Two, when he told them they followed him only for the Loaves, they say unto him, *What Sign shewest thou that we should believe? What work dost thou?* As if he had never wrought a Miracle before. Yea, our Lord hath told us, *If we will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither would we believe, though one should rise from the Dead.* Though one of your Acquaintance who Perished in his Sins, should appear at Midnight in a Frightful Shape, and warn thee in particular by his Example, to take heed of Youthful Lusts, and not continue one Hour longer so near to endless and intolerable Misery, as is every Impenitent Sinner? Should he tell thee, that he once made a Mock of Sin, and a Jest of Hell, and a Scorn of Godliness, as thou dost? That he did not believe there was such a Holy, Terrible God, as now he finds; or that it would be so fearful a thing to fall into his Hands? but now he feels the Word of God to be true; and that for a Foolish Lust, he hath the Remembrance of a Miserable Eternity. If such Warnings were given, they would not awaken Men to Repentance,

John 6.14,
22, 26, 30.

Luk. 16.31.

Repentance, unto whom the Preaching of the Word is not effectual. We read, that after the Resurrection of *Lazarus* from the Dead, they that knew him before, and knew he was raised again, and Conversed with him afterwards, were not Converted to believe on Christ; for *from that very Day* of his Raising *Lazarus*, the High-Priests, and Scribes, and Rulers, and People, took Council how they might put him to Death. The like may be said concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ himself. John 11. 53.

And how many do we see brought to the very brink of the Grave, within a step of Death and Hell, both in their own apprehension, and in the judgment of others, who upon an unexpected Recovery, (not unlike a Resurrection,) have been far from being reclaimed and bettered afterwards? Their forc'd Repentance vanisheth, when the fear of dying ceaseth. It is the Ministry of the Word, which is the *ordinary* Method that God hath appointed for our Sanctification; and if that be not effectual, these extraordinary Methods would not.

Fourthly, It remains to be considered, That if this Word become the effectual means of our Sanctification, we must carefully attend, and *take heed* unto it. The Original imports to *observe narrowly*, with Psal. 130. great exactness; we must still have it in our Eye, that 3. we may form our Designs, regulate our Affections, and order our Ways accordingly. We must care-Josh. 1. 8. fully preserve it as a Treasure, and watchfully observe it as a Rule; we must *hide it in our Hearts*, verse 11. A competent knowledge of this Word, and diligent endeavour to encrease it, is manifestly supposed; and that we *give earnest heed to the things* Heb. 2. 1.

we Read or Hear, lest at any time we let them slip. We must study the Mind of God in the Holy Scriptures; wait on the Publick Preaching of it; consider its Tendency and Use, as able to make us Wise unto Salvation. We should ponder it in our Hearts, and endeavour to preserve it there, that it may cohabit and dwell *with us*, and *in us*, and be unto us *the Joy and Rejoycing of our Hearts*: Yielding up our selves unto the Power of Truth, that we may experience its Holy Efficacy to all the Ends for which God hath appointed it.

1. What is first, and most obviously to be Collected from what hath been said, is the *Usefulness* and *Necessity* of the *Holy Scriptures*. What excellent Knowledge may be found there, for the cure of our Ignorance? What Sanctifying Influence, for the purifying of our Hearts and Ways? What Establishment and Strength to fix our Wavering Minds, and heal our Unsettledness? How certain and Divine are its Instructions? How Pure and Spiritual, and yet Plain and Express, are its Precepts? What pungent and smart Reproofs? what inviting Promises? what terrifying Threatnings, are imployed in this Word? to lead us into the way of Life, and save us from the Paths of the Destroyer? How fitly do the effects of it answer its Name? of *the Power of God*, *and the Rod of his Strength*, *the Power of God to the Salvation of the Soul*? *It is quick and powerful, sharper than a Two-Edged Sword*, to pierce and wound by Conviction. It is the *Word of God's Grace*, to heal those Wounds; *able to build us up, and give us an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified*. What Sins are to be avoided, how Temptations are to be resisted, how Bosom Lusts are to be Mortified, and a
Pure,

Pure, Acceptable Worship to be performed, and what otherwise is necessary to the pleasing of God, and Communion with him, is taught us in this Word.

Hereby we are acquainted with our Sin and Misery, and told the only way of our Recovery and Happiness. The Malicious Arts and Stratagems of the Devil are here unfolded; hence we are instructed how to conceive of God, how to approach to him, converse with him, and resemble him. Our Steps are hereby directed by unerring Light; our Purposes settled, and our Course stated; and Directions given us how to use our Selves, and all we have for the Service of our Maker, Redeemer and Sanctifier. By taking heed to this Light, we are safely led out of those Labyrinths, where others have lost their way, and may prevent stumbling into the Pit of Destruction, into which others fall. All the Doctrins and Precepts of this Word, tend to our Healing and Recovery; to promote the perfection and felicity of our Nature; to bring us to the best kind of *Life* for the present, in respect of duty to God, comfort to our Selves, and usefulness unto others: And this in the expectation of the Heavenly Reward: enabling us in some measure to partake of the Earnest, and enjoy the Fore-tastes of it. In short, It is by this Word that we believe in Christ, and have hope towards God, and are enabled to love him, and so to dwell in Love. Our *Faith*, our *Hope*, our *Love* to God and Christ, are all begun, cherished and maintained by the influence of this Word. To this we owe that *Faith* whereby we are vitally united to the Son of God; that *Hope* whereby all our Grace flourisheth; and that *Love* whereby we are Fruitful. For as by Faith we have a
Spiritual

Spiritual Life, by Hope we gather Strength, and by Love we become active in all the Fruits of Holy Obedience.

2. This will justify the extraordinary *Esteem* and *Affection* that Good Men have for *the Word of God*. Who, after such experience of its cleansing Virtue, but must profess, that the Sayings of this Book are *Faithful*, and *True*, and *Worthy of all Acceptation*? *more to be desired than Gold, than much Fine Gold, sweeter than the Honey and the Honey-Comb*? O how love I *thy Law*! saith David, *It is my Meditation all the Day. I will never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me.* O that this Law might be continually within my Heart, to enlighten, counsel and refresh me! that it may dwell richly in me; be always an Ornament of Grace to my Head, and a Chain of Gold about my Neck; Health to my Navel, and Marrow to my Bones! I heard its Voice, I felt its Power, and beheld its glorious Beauty, and so have been changed into the same Image; and shall I not love it? If any should seem to wonder, and think such Estimations and Affections strange, you may answer with the Man born Blind, *John 9. 30. This is a marvellous thing, that you know not what it is, or why I so much prize and love it, when it hath opened my Eyes.* I was Spiritually Dead and Defiled, and by this Word I received quickning and cleansing. No wonder therefore, if

Phil. 3. 7, 8. I account all things but Dross and Dung in comparison of this Knowledge.

3. What *Thankfulness* should they express, whose Hearts have been seasoned with Holy Principles and Affections *betimes*; and their Way cleansed by the Word of God? If through the Knowledge of Christ, you have escaped the Pollutions that are in the World,

World, through Youthful Lusts, (when so many others are thereby Drowned in the Gulph of Perdition,) should you not be very Thankful? When you behold Multitudes who wallow in the Mire, and take Pleasure in the ways of Sin, are regardless of God and Christ, and the Eternal World, you may say, I was as Mad as they, or should certainly have been so, if Free Grace had not prevented. What Gratitude do I owe to my Redeemer, and his Mighty Spirit, who makes me thus to differ! Many of you can look back with Joy and Praise upon the *Early Experience* you have had of this kind. You can reflect how *early* God began with your Souls, *so early*, that your Baptism seemed to have had its effects and influence presently; *so early* with some, that you cannot tell the very time when God first began. Others can remember the special Instruments whom God imployed from time to time to do them good; by what careful and prudent Education, by what useful Examples of Holy and Affectionate Relations, by what convincing Sermons, by what awak'ning Providences, by what repeated Motions and Strivings of the Spirit of the Grace, you were brought to the knowledg of your Sin and Duty, and enabled to own and avow your *Baptismal Covenant*, and seriously out of choice come under the Bond of it. To which Purpose *David* acknowledgeth God, *Psal.* 16. 2, 7. *O my Soul, thou hast said to the Lord, thou art my Lord, therefore I will bless thee, who hast given me Counsell*, and enabled me to receive it; who hast enlightened my Darknes, removed my Prejudices, cleansed me from my Pollutions, softened my hard Heart, subdued my Enmity and Disaffection to thee, and made me willing in the Day

Day of thy Power, to come to Christ that I might have Life and Healing by him. *Lord how is it that thou dost manifest thy Self to me, and not unto the World!* That I should be quickned and cleansed, while others are left under Spiritual Defilement and Death.

4. What need have *Superiors* to be careful and diligent to bring *Young Persons* under their Charge, acquainted with the *Word of God*? It is mentioned not only to the Praise of Young *Timothy*, but of those who were concerned in his Education, that *he*
■ Tim. 3: 15 *knew the Holy Scriptures from his Childhood, i. e.* those of the Old Testament, for scarce any other were then written when he was a Child. He was also acquainted with what was necessary to be known concerning *Christ*, as is mentioned in the same Verse, under the Expression of *the Faith which is in Christ Jesus*. Women and Children had then the Scriptures in a Language they understood; for his Grandmother *Lois* and his Mother *Eunice* instructed him very early in the knowledge of God and Christ.

The Debauchery of Youth is very much owing to the want of good Principles instilled into their Minds in their Tender Years: By that means they are a more easie Prey to the Devil; having little or nothing to oppose, to the Snares he lays for them, or to their own corrupt Inclinations. You therefore that give up your Children to God by Baptism in Infancy, you seem to profess a Desire they should be *his* as soon as *yours*; you solemnly ingage and promise to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; but how false to God and them must you appear, if you do not season them with Holy Principles betimes! if when you know they have Immortal Souls to Save, and an Eternal
 Blessedness

Blessedness to obtain, and endless Misery to escape, yet bring them up in *Ignorance*, without that necessary Knowledge that must make them wise to Salvation. If you do not instruct them in the Rules and Obligations of their Duty, that they may *know the God of their Father*; and *serve him with a perfect Heart*. If you do not mind them of the Evil of Sin, the Uncertainty of this Life, and the Assurance of an Everlasting State, of the Truth, and Consequences of the Fall of Man, of the way of our Reconciliation to God, and the Participation of his Image, &c. If you do not inculcate these plain and necessary Truths upon them; if you do not bring them to the publick Worship; teach them how to spend the Lords Day; observe their particular Tempers, Corruptions, and Temptations, and apply your selves accordingly with Wisdom and Seriousness for their good.

Of all others you have the most Power over them, and Interest in them; none have such Advantages and Opportunities to instruct and persuade them as you. None are under so many Obligations of Duty, and Interest of every sort as you. It is therefore Unnatural and Unexcusable to neglect it.

You are not easily Apprehensive how much your present Comfort is concerned in it; for if while they are Young, you are negligent in *your* Duty to them, they are likely enough when grown up, to fail of *theirs* to you. And it is but just they should not know their Duty to *You*, if you do not instruct them in theirs to *God*. These *Arrows* (to which they are compared in Scripture, and happy is he that hath his Quiver full of them,) should be directed right at first, for accordingly they are like to Fly afterwards.

Prov. 22. 6.

Deut. 4. 9.

— 11. 19.

wards. It may fall out otherwise, but usually the gracious or vicious Habits of the First Age are transmitted to the next; and the after Conversation is suitable to the Education of Childhood and Youth. Besides the Sin and Mischief which you may prevent. For we know not at what Period of Time a Child comes to the use of Reason; and so cannot tell when God will impute their Follies, nor whether they will tend; or what Impressions they may leave. But when he does not impute them to Damnation, it may be he will so far, as to cause Sickness, or an hasty Death. And therefore they should be instructed in their Duty, *so soon as capable*, and be restrained from the material Parts of any Evil, even evil Words, which they understand not.

* Mr. H.
Palmer.
Dr. H. Wil-
kinson, on
Job 13. 26.
p. 17.

Before I dismiss this Head, let me mind you that are *Masters of Families*, that you ought thus carefully to instruct your Younger Servants, the care of whose Souls is committed to you by the Providence of God: Your own safety and comfort, and the good success of your Civil affairs, is concerned in it, as well as your Duty. * An Eminent Preacher in his time, upon a like occasion, in a Sermon at *Al-dermanbury*, made mention of a memorable Passage to this purpose. That in the beginning of the *Irish Rebellion*, there were some Popish *Servants* cut the Throats of those who had formerly been their *Masters*, telling them that *they should have taught them better*.

Somewhat of *Direction* and *Counsel* I would now add unto the Younger sort. Let me therefore beseech you,

First, To make a Pause, to stop a while, and bethink your selves: Employ some time in a serious Consideration

Consideration of your Hearts and Ways, according to this Word of God. Think, what sort of Creatures you are, and how you came into this World? Who was the Author of your Beings, and the Original of all things? What did he make you for? but to Glorifie and Enjoy him? How wretchedly uncapable you have rendered your selves of both? And in order to your Relief, what is to be done on your part, and what may be hoped for on God's; and how remediless your Case is, if this Affair be not begun to be transacted before the only time is past, wherein it may be done. O try your Reason, and use it in such Reflections. Think in what a Condition you were born; how you have lived; what you have done, and what you now are; whether you are going, and where you must shortly be: Think what your sinful Folly hath already cost you; what you have lost, and the manifold Hurts and Mischiefs you have received by it. What unthrifty Bargains you have made, and what is the bitter Fruit of those things whereof you are now ashamed. The Devil himself cannot persuade you, but *you must Die*; and you dare not say or think that there is not an everlasting *Heaven* or *Hell*: You therefore sometimes wish to die the Death of the Righteous. And will you not consider a little, how impossible that is, without being like them while you live?

Secondly, Endeavour clearer *Apprehensions*, and a better *Understanding* of the *Religion* you profess, as to the Evidence of its Principles, the Nature, Grounds and Reasons of it. That you may know your own Case, and what it is to be a Christian, and what the necessary change does imply, and how it is to be wrought. That you may know the *God* from whom

you have revolted ; whom you are to obey as your Sovereign Ruler, and to enjoy as your chief good. That you may know the *Saviour*, that must befriend you for the Pardon of Sin , and for Eternal Life. That you may know the *Holy-Ghost*, the Sanctifier, by whom you must be Enlightened, Quickened and Renewed. How can you love and obey your Maker, if you know him not ? what he is, and how he will be served ? How can you believe on Christ, if you know not who he is, or what he hath Done and Suffered, Purchased, Promised, Offered , Prepared, and is ready to be, and do, and give ? How can you bewail your Sin and Misery ? Loath your selves, and seek for Grace , if you continue Ignorant of such things as these ? It is by the Light of Holy Knowledge you must be recovered ; you are
 2 Cor. 3.4. *lost* and perishing , while this *Gospel* is *hid* from you. If you are not sensible of your own Ignorance and Disease, and where is the Remedy ; how will you come to Christ as your Teacher and Physician ?

Thirdly , To this end , diligently *study the Holy Scriptures* , and attend the *Publick Preaching* of the
 Deut. 17. Word, *with suitable Desires and Designs*. Apprehend
 18. the weight of the matters treated of, and know that it is for your Life : You know not the advantage of an affectionate Study of the Holy Scriptures. While
 Acts 8. 26. the *Ethiopian Eunuch* was reading in the Prophet *Isaiah*, though he understood it not, God did so far reward and bless him, that he sent *Philip* to instruct him farther, and his Conversion to the Faith was the Issue of it. When ever you hear the Word Preached, remember in whose Name, and upon what Arrand the Message comes.

Therefore,

Therefore lay aside every Prejudice, and place your selves as under the Eye of your All-seeing Judge. We that speak to you in the name of the Lord, have very much to blame our selves for, God knows, that we are not Serious enough, and Compassionate enough to the Souls of Men: (not adapting our selves to the Capacities and Necessities of the Younger and more Ignorant sort.) Alas! we see and know but little, and feel less of the great important things we speak of. And though we hope we find Mercy to be Faithful, yet how short do we come of that Affection and Vigor, and serious Importunity, which the case of Sinful Perishing Souls doth need? How unlike those that know the Terrors of the Lord, the value of an Immortal Soul, and the nearness of Eternity? How unbecoming those who speak every Lord's Day unto Men and Women, unto whom we may never speak more? And it may be such and such of you shall never hear a Sermon more; take heed therefore how you hear.

Fourthly, Be most Importunate with God for the Spirit of Holiness and Sanctification. He alone can restore Life to thy Dead Soul, and conquer the Enmity of thy Heart against Holiness. For we are Saved by the Washing of Regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, 3 Tit. 5. Beg the Holy Spirit, with an Earnestness answerable to your Necessity of what you ask; that he may be a Living Principle, to cause you to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Commandments. Forgiveness of Sin is not all that you need; you are Diseased and Defiled, and need to be Cured and Cleansed. If you ask the Holy Spirit with an apprehension and feeling of your need of his powerful Influence, you may supplicate and

Jam. 1.21.

Luk. 8.18.

Act. 10.33.

Ezek. 36.

26, 27.

Mat. 5. 6.
Chap. 7. 11.

and plead the Promise in Hope, that God will more readily grant you, than any Father upon Earth gives Bread to his Children. *They that seek him early and earnestly, shall find him.* Our Lord is exalted to give Repentance, and Saving Faith; his Powerful Grace can subdue the most Impetuous Lusts of Youth. You may be earnest and importunate with God for these things; he does not require or expect you should be contented to perish in your Filthiness and Unbelief, despairing of Help, as if the case of Man were like that of Devils: He requires you to Hope, and is pleased with it. And if you find any Motions and Strivings of this Blessed Spirit, in answer to Prayer, cherish every Beginning of it, as an Earnest of more. Be thankful for every Beam of Heavenly Light, from the God of all Grace; it may prove the dawning of a more perfect Day. Beg that this mighty Spirit would open your *Eyes and Hearts*, that being convinced of the certainty and reality of the Gospel Revelation, by the view of its suitability to your case, and the many glorious advantages that are offered by it, you may be brought to love it as Amiable; and yield up your selves entirely in compliance with it.

See Mr.
How's Re-
deemer's
Tears, p.
118.

Fifthly, Take heed of Declining after good and *hopeful Beginnings*. How many Young Persons have begun in the Spirit, and ended in the Flesh? Light hath shone in upon their Minds; they have been under awakning Convictions by the Word; strong Affections have been excited by it; they delighted to hear and read it; they kept up a course of secret Prayer for some time, &c. and yet have afterwards fallen away to a Vicious Life. It may be they had not considered and counted the cost of being Resolved

Resolved Christians ; what they must abandon and forsake ; what pleasing Temptations they must avoid and resist ; what instances of Self-denial they must consent to, &c. And therefore by the Sollicitation, or Sophistry, or Jears of their Old Companions, through the Subtilty of Satan, and the Power of Youthful Lusts, they have been intangled again with the Pollutions of the World, and the Strong Man hath re-enter'd the House, with Seven Evil-Spirits worse than himself.

How Miserable is the case of such, after they have been enlightned, and in part delivered, who ^{2 Tim. 2.} return to their former Bondage, and are *led Captive by the Devil at his Will!* They were not far from the Kingdom of God ; they seemed to consent to be the Lord's ; they were almost perswaded to take the Yoke of Christ upon them, as his resolved Followers : but now have taken leave of him, and are at the Command of Satan ; *his Will is theirs* : If he bid them think as little of God as they can, despise the Holy Scripture, make light of Sabbaths and Sermons, and all good Counsel, *they do it.* If he bid them gratifie their Carnal Appetites, indulge their Sensual Inclinations, and frequent such and such ensnaring Company, *they do it.* They are led Captive by him *at his Will.* With what Hearty Compassion should we think and speak of the case of such ! and many such there be. But if you are not harden'd through the deceitfulness of sin, past all feeling, I would feign ask you, whether you are not yet *willing* to return ? If Mercy may be had, and you may yet be recovered out of the Snare of the Devil ; Dare you solemnly and expressly in so many Words, take leave of Christ, and bid him farewell for ever ?

Are

Are you content to forfeit his Favour, and throw up all hopes of it, and venture his Eternal Displeasure? Would you not yet return, if God would receive you? If there be Balm in *Gilead*, and a Physician there, that you may be healed? May I not tell you, in the Name of Christ, that *there is*; and that if you return with your whole Heart, (you especially, who are the Children of Holy Parents,) he will yet receive you: He will meet you half-way, and bid you welcom. He will heal your Backslidings, and blot out your Transgressions, and remember your Iniquities no more. He pawns the Authority of his own great Name for this, *Three* several times in one Verse, to assure you of it, *Zach. i.*

Hos. 14. 1, 2, 3. *3.*
 Isa. 55. 6, 7, 8.
 Prov. 1. 23. *3.* Turn ye at my Reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, is the Voice of Wisdom.

I might likewise direct you in your Addresses to God for his Purifying Grace, to Eye *the Blood of* Christ*, as the procuring cause of your Sanctification; and the *Holy Spirit*, the Purchase of that Blood, as the great Sanctifier of Souls. I might urge you farther,* that with an hearty abhorrence of every Sin, you would penitently and thankfully renew the *Covenant* you made with God in your *Baptism*, yielding your Selves to the Lord, as the most solemn and Important Transaction of your whole Lives. And be sure * keep out of the way of *Temptation* as much as you can, endeavouring to avoid those particular Snares by which you are most easily overcome. Pretend not a Resolution against the Sin, if you are willing to look upon the Temptation; to walk upon the brink of the River, and to come near the door of that House, into which you know you must not enter. It is impossible a Man should love to abide

abide by a Temptation for a good end, or without unspeakable Hazard. It is vain Confidence on your own Strength, to come as near Sin as you durst, and the Event does commonly prove it so. Especially * see that you well imploy your Time upon *the Lords Day*; and take heed to your * *Company* all the Week. Few of the Younger sort Miscarry, but date their Sin and Ruin from the neglect of this Counsel. * Begin with God every *Morning*, by serious *Prayer*, and Reading some part of the *Holy Scriptures*, with some *Practical Affectionate Book*, if but for a quarter of an Hour; it would leave a serious Tincture on the Mind, and a good Savour on the Heart, and be of use to antidote you against Temptation, and to preserve a Holy frame all the Day. But * never desist your diligent *Endeavours*, till you come to *walk with God* in his Love and Fear, and as under his Eye, all the Day long: That the pleasing of God may become the Business, and Pleasure of your Lives.

Lastly, Do not *delay* Compliance with these Counsels, but presently set about it; can you begin too soon to cleanse your Hearts and Ways? Is it *too soon* to be reconciled to God, and delivered from the danger of Damnation? Can you attain Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and a well grounded Hope of Eternal Life *too soon*? If you languish'd under a noisom Distemper that threatned your Life, would you imagin you could be healed too soon? And how much Sin and Mischief, Shame and Sorrow, and bitter Repentance may you prevent, by taking heed unto the Word of God betimes? How much larger Opportunities for the glorifying of God, have *Young Converts*, than *late Penitents*,

See Mr.
Charnock,
Vol. 2. p.
57, 58.

tents, though they be Sincere? What Advantages never to be retrieved have they lost, who have out-sinned their Youth? because their Time is gone, and can never be recalled. What Honour may you bring to God, who remember your Creator in the days of your Youth? What Ornaments to your Profession may you prove? Of what usefulness unto others in this World? being filled with the Spirit of God. What attainments in Grace, and the knowledge of Christ, and what additional degrees of Glory may you reach? You may grow to a greater Stature, being new born in Youth, and bring forth more and better Fruit in Old Age: You will have a longer time of Peace of Conscience, and of the Comforts of the Spirit; much sweeter fore-tastes of Heaven, and improved meetness for it. You may lay up Treasures of Experience to confute the Devil, if he assault you on a Death-Bed, &c.

And is it nothing to despise all these advantages of an Early Piety? to secure the comfort and usefulness for the future part of your Lives? Is it nothing to be prepared for a sudden Death? and to provide against the Pangs and Sorrowful Reflections of a Death-bed? Is it nothing, when you come to Die, to review your former Life with Joy? saying, *Lord! remember how I have served thee, the God of my Fathers, from my Childhood, and Youth!* Is it nothing to bring God greater Glory in this World? and receive a more weighty and sparkling Crown of Glory in the next? Have you not been often told, how much more difficult your Repentance and Conversion to God will hereafter be, than now, if you should be spared some Years longer? Are your Hearts like to be better by longer continuance in Sin? Will the Justice

stice of God be less provoked? will it not be more? Will the Devil have less advantage against you, when he hath had so much longer Possession? *To Day, while it is called to Day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* It is some hardning of your Hearts, not to hearken to his Voice *this day*: It is one step more towards final Impenitence and Unbelief, against which there is no Remedy provided in the Gospel. How hardly was that Man Cured, who was possessed with a Devil from his Childhood? The more you are alienated from the Life of God, the harder will be your Recovery. Mark 9. 29.

And how much greater is the provocation against God, by every such Delay? How aggravated and displeasing is your base ingratitude against the Blessed God, and a Merciful Redeemer? You reject his present Call, slight his Kindness, and refuse his Love, and in effect tell him, that though you have no mind to perish, but that one time or other before you die, you will accept it; that yet you have other Business for the present to mind; it will be time enough for that when you are more at leisure. Your Youthful Lusts now call you, your Secular Affairs and Settlement in the World now call you to other Thoughts; and *these* shall be *first* minded and served. Your Compassionate Physician offers his Help, and promises a Cure, if you will but hearken and submit to him: You tell him in effect, that you like your Leprosie, and are in love with your Disease: You care not to be recovered to Health: you will not as yet be Purged and Healed; though one time or other you intend to call for his Assistance. May he not most justly say unto you, *Let him that is filthy, be filthy still. You would not be purged from your filthiness, therefore you shall not, till you die.*

How bitter will be the Thoughts of these repeated Calls neglected ? What cold Horror, and Shivering Dread shall seize thee on a Bed of Languishing ? which some may take for *true Repentance*. But, Oh how little of *that*, which by a large Charity we hope is so, may the Righteous God accept ? and who can tell whether he does or no ? For such Men see themselves upon the brink of the Grave, and stepping into Hell, and know it is as much as their Souls are worth, presently to make Peace with God by unfeigned Repentance.

No wonder then if they let fall some little Drops of a beginning Sorrow ; if they have some extorted Resolutions of Living better ; some sudden Remorse and Regret for those Sins, that they are now like to be Damned for ; some quick and rash Vows of an Awaken'd Conscience ; with some Confusion of Face under the Fears of Death and Judgment. But at such a time, it is hard to distinguish between Religious Sighs and Natural Groans ; or separate their Repenting Cries for Mercy, from their Howlings on their Beds through Bodily Pain. 'Tis true, God may work Miracles of Mercy on such Convinced Sinners, who did not seek to him till the *Eleventh Hour* ; but whether he will no, there is no Certainty or Probability, but that he can if he please ; which to Persons in that condition, who fear an Everlasting Hell the next Hour, is a sad uncomfortable Thought. No Man in his Wits that reads the Bible, would run the Hazard.

If they have the use of Reason, and are not harden'd in Atheism and Infidelity, they cannot but fear and tremble : Peace and Prosperity may transport Men ; the Mouth of *Conscience* may be stop'd
in

in Health by false Principles, and the Voice of Flattering Company ; its secret Whispers may be drown'd by the noise and hurry of Business, or diverted, brib'd, and abus'd by the entertainments of Sense, and the deceitfulness of Riches. But in Sickness and Affliction, when dis-intangled from its Fetters, Conscience will speak its own Sense ; and it ever speaks loudest in a time of Calamity : Then it will witness and accuse, condemn and terrifie. All their Arts of Oblivion cannot make it silent ; it will disquiet them with Fears and Torments, which encrease at the approach of *Death*, and after *Death* are the beginning of *Hell*. For though, as one says, *That* may not be fully opened till the last Judgment, yet the Anguish of *Conscience* is a part of Hell-Fire, preparatory to the Horrible Sentence of Dooms-day.

Now, Is he *his own Murderer*, who would not endeavour to make Peace with God, when in danger of approaching *Death* ? The like is he, who will defer this for *one Day*, because every Day of such delay is a Day of Danger ; and so is he obliged by the same care for himself, and concern for his Soul, if he Sinned Yesterday, to Repent to Day, lest he be Dead to Morrow. For how many Persons die Suddenly ? (many have done so of late, and more may ;) and who knows that he shall not ? Thy Sick Neighbour may recover and live many Years, and he that is now in Health, may expire the next Hour. You are also uncertain of a tedious Sickness, to afford you the lingering forerunners of *Death* ; or of such a one, as shall not disturb the Brain, and unfit for serious Thoughts. The first Symptom of your last Sickness, may conclude your Life ; you may not have time to complain or cry. *Jeb 36. 13, 14. They cry not when he bindeth them, they die in their Youth, and*
their

their Life is among the Unclean. How groundless are the Expectations of arriving to Old-Age? The Almond-Tree does not every where flourish. Hardly one or Two of a great Multitude, lay down a Hoary Head in the Bed of the Grave. Very little Ripe Fruit is gathered into the Basket, in comparison of the many Blossoms that fall to the Ground. Is not your Constitution in Youth more tender? and consequently more subject to external Impressions, that may cause Sickness: While grown Branches can stand the shock of a Cold Winter, every Blast or Storm will spoil the Beauty of new blown Flowers. And yet though you know this, and therefore must grant your length of Days no surer than that of others, and your presuming on the future equally hazardous, and without ground; you will not *now* Repent, and turn to God. It may be you Resolve you *will*, if you live till *hereafter*; that is, you are content to to be Damned if you die before that time: And *who*

Prov. 27. 1. *knows what a Day may bring forth?*
Jam. 4. 14.

Though you are now Strong and Healthful, in the heat and Wantonness of Youthful Blood, or in the strength and vigour of your Age, and begin to have a throng of Worldly Business, may not the same be said of some of those who died the last Week? who it may be delayed their Repentance on the like grounds, and thought their own Death as improbable as you do yours; which is now so much the nearer, by how many Days you have surviv'd them. Is there any of you but would willingly Repent, and turn to God, one Day before you die? And who can be sure to do that, who delays till *to Morrow*? I persuade my self, you cannot think that you shall be exempted from appearing before the Bar of Christ, if you die in Youth: Or that those Lusts and Sins that are Damning to Men of Forty,

will not be reckon'd for by God, or hereafter punish'd, because committed by one of Sixteen. Will you yet boldly put it to the venture? and *Rejoyce O Young Man* Eccl. 9. 11 *in thy Youth, and walk in the way of thy own Heart, and neither know nor consider, that for all these things God will bring thee to Judgment.* And how soon may you receive that Summons? every whit as soon as if you had lived many Years longer. To several Diseases *You* are more obnoxious than Elder Persons, to some that are now Reigning, and often prove Mortal, as you are more full of warm Blood, to catch the Infection; particularly the *Small-Pox*.

By which Distemper it pleas'd God to visit *this young Gentleman*, Mr. *Richard Walter*, in the Eighteenth Year of his Age; concerning whom, (as it will not be needful, so) it cannot be expected I should speak much, being almost a Stranger to him, till the last Scene of his Life. When I was requested to joyn with some Friends in Prayer for him, and afterwards at his own Desire visited him, and prayed with him. I found him in a very Penitent and Serious frame, which I hope was not the bare effect of his having receiv'd the Sentence of Death in himself; not only because during his whole Sickness, he discovered the like Temper of Mind, whenever he had the free Exercise of Reason, (which after some Days *Delirium*, God was pleas'd very observably to restore in answer to Prayer,) but because he had formerly been under very serious Impressions of what concern'd his Soul, and the Everlasting World. Unto which purpose, the practical Books of that Great and Holy Man Mr. *Baxter*, were useful to him; as they have been unto Thousands more. These Impressions I hope did remain, and were now and then awaken'd and reviv'd upon him, notwithstanding the dangerous Snares and Temptations of Youth. His fervent and penitent
Supplications

Supplications to Heaven, as the fruit of these, I hope found Acceptance with the Father of Mercies, thro' the Mediation of Christ: For at the very last he was not afraid or unwilling to Dye. Notwithstanding that he express'd a very great Sense of his Sin, he could yet say *'I hope my Dear Redeemer hath enabled me to Repent and hath forgiven me. There is Pity in his Bosom, and Mercy in his Breast.* And so he went on, mentioning some Scriptures to that purpose.

There is one thing I would add, (which may be *useful* and Exemplary, if God allow you the use of Reason on a Sick Bed,) that before he died, he was willing to do something to promote the Salvation of his Acquaintance and Companions, as the best Expression of his Friendship to 'em, by exciting them to consider their Latter End, and prepare for the other World, where we must have our unchangable, Eternal Abode. This appear'd, when I spake to him on that Head, by the instructive Messages he desir'd me to convey to some of 'em, and by his most affectionate Wish, and *Prayer for his * Parents*, when I parted from him, viz. *That he might meet them in Heaven; where, he said, will be more and better Pleasure in one Moment, than is to be found in all the Enjoyments of this World for a Thousand Years.*

* In the Island of Barbadoes.

God grant that they, and all his Relations and Acquaintance, such especially who have desir'd this Sermon, may wisely improve his Decease which administered the occasion. And may it be of some use to all the Younger sort who heard it, or may now read it to help 'em to consider, and remember the Divine Counsel of this Text, *how Young Men may cleanse their Ways, by taking heed unto the Word of God.*

THE END.